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Citation for published version:

Taxidou, O 2019, Communities of production and consumption: Modernism and the re-birth of tragedy. in J Wallace (ed.), *A Cultural History of Tragedy in the Modern Age: 1920-Present*. 1 edn, The Cultural Histories Series, vol. 6, Bloomsbury.

Link:

[Link to publication record in Edinburgh Research Explorer](#)

Document Version:

Peer reviewed version

Published In:

A Cultural History of Tragedy in the Modern Age

Publisher Rights Statement:

This is an Accepted Manuscript of a book chapter published by Bloomsbury Academic in *A Cultural History of Tragedy* Vol. 6 on 31 Oct 2019, available online: <https://www.bloomsbury.com/uk/a-cultural-history-of-tragedy-9781474288149/>

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Communities of Production and Consumption

Modernism and the Re-birth of Tragedy

Olga Taxidou

Peter Szondi's somewhat aphoristic opening to his *Essay on the Tragic* ("Since Aristotle, there has been a poetics of tragedy. Only since Schelling has there been a philosophy of the tragic"¹) has been very influential in establishing and theorizing the distinction - sometimes binary – between tragedy as a poetic practice and tragedy as a philosophical discourse. This reading of the tragic that German Idealism contributes to after Kant and through the crucial works of Schelling, Hölderlin, Hegel and ultimately Nietzsche, is less of a break or a transition from poetics to metaphysics and more of a multiplying of the tragic, a radical reconfiguration of the relationship between aesthetics and metaphysics. As Miriam Leonard claims, "The philosophy of the tragic did not represent a departure from aesthetics and a refuge in metaphysics"; rather it proposed "the elevation of aesthetics to a new position within philosophy".² Tragedy, in this reading, is seen as adding an aestheticizing impulse to philosophy.

This chapter will trace some of the ways this fusion of philosophy and aesthetics that is inherited from German Idealism and in many ways both compounded and challenged by Friedrich Nietzsche's seminal work, *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872), is enacted and experimented with in modernist engagements with tragedy. Far from heralding the "death of tragedy",³ modernism represents some of the most articulate and passionate encounters with tragedy as both an idea and a practice. This practice is, of course, mostly through specific performances or

attempts at performance. These performances are mostly formally experimental, and crucially are almost always accompanied by theoretical / philosophical writing, from essays to manifestos. From T. S. Eliot's attempts at creating Christian tragedies, to W. B. Yeats's and Ezra Pound's translations of Greek plays, to Bertolt Brecht's and Antonin Artaud's denouncing of tragedy in their formulations of Epic Theatre and Theatre of Cruelty respectively, to Edward Gordon Craig's and Isadora Duncan's calling upon the Greeks in their formulations of theories of acting and dancing, we could claim that modernism represents one of the most significant revivals of tragedy as both a poetics and a philosophy. Indeed, the emphasis that modernist theatre makers place on performance as an embodied civic event may help to elide the binary between tragedy as a philosophy and tragedy as a poetics. Thus a specific modernist view of tragedy and the tragic is created that shapes the many afterlives that tragedy has had throughout the twentieth century and beyond.

The heightened position that tragedy occupies in the philosophies of modernity, this chapter claims, is mirrored on the stages of modernism. Sometimes proposing classical tragedy as a model to be emulated or at other times as the ultimate example of theatre's failure to address contemporary predicaments, dramatists' encounters with tragedy proved crucial in helping modernist performance to articulate both its theoretical language and its performance practices. Indeed, we may claim almost counter-intuitively that the encounter with tragedy attests both to modernism's neo-classicism and to its radical newness. In this sense the oldest form of theatre in the European canon is called upon in order for modernist performance to stake a claim for its autonomy. Crucially, this quest for autonomy engages tragedy not solely in literary terms, responding to the plays of Aeschylus, Sophocles and

Euripides. Parallel to the concerns about translation and the overall poetics of tragedy, modernist theatrical experimentation also approaches tragedy as part of its quest for a non-naturalistic, non-psychological mode of performance. In this sense, the theatrical conventions of tragedy (like the mask and the chorus) offer modernist theatre makers new modes of theatrical experimentation. These experiments are now forged not solely by philosophers, but by playwrights, directors, actors, stage designers, composers, choreographers and dancers. And this may represent one of the most radical aspects of this modernist encounter with the tragic, what, following Jacques Rancière, we might call a “re-distribution of the sensible”,⁴ where the conceptual, aesthetic, and political field of the tragic is opened up to include practising artists.

Sometimes this quest for the autonomy of performance has been read as exclusively anti-textual, heralding a somewhat arbitrary “freedom” for the stage. However, the modernist dialogue with tragedy, both formal and thematic, also brings to the fore the issue of poetry on the stage. The poetry of tragedy is as central as the performative experiments it inspired. The relationships between the poetic word and the performing body forms one of the main concerns of the period. T. S. Eliot’s essays on poetic drama, as he writes Christian tragedies, are very significant in this context, as are W.B. Yeats’s experiments with poetic drama for the Abbey theatre while he is translating *Oedipus the King*. Translation itself, crucial for literary modernism, is theorised and approached in new radical ways. Walter Benjamin’s influential essay from the same period, *The Task of the Translator* (1923),⁵ may offer ways of approaching translations like Ezra Pound’s *Electra* (1949) and *The Women of Trachis* (1956), where the notions of faithfulness are drastically re-worked,

creating almost new works that we may say, following Benjamin, are premised on the principles of reproducibility and adaptability, rather than reproduction and faithfulness. This approach to translation could itself be read as continuing a tradition initiated by German Idealism, and particularly Friedrich Hölderlin (1770-1843), whose translations were attacked during his time for their errors and inconsistencies. The modernist translators, and particularly Pound, could be seen as continuing this tradition of Hölderlin, where the task of the translator is less about remaining faithful to the *letter* of the Greek plays, and more about using them as a channel for contemporary concerns and linguistic experiments.

These experiments are part of modernism's linguistic turn, but also part of its performative turn. This relationship with tragedy that this chapter sketches out also stresses the constitutive bind between linguistic and performative experiments. The fascination with the poetic word on stage is also paralleled by an equal concern with the performing body. The debates, manifestos and essays about the presence or absence of the performing body also have a distinctly tragic dimension. Isadora Duncan's experiments in dance are directly influenced by Nietzsche's *The Birth of Tragedy*. Edward Gordon Craig's manifesto "The Actor and the Übermarionette" (1908) is framed by two significant quotations on tragedy, from Aristotle and Plato, rehearsing the anti-theatricality debate about the representational efficacy of the performing body.

Craig and Duncan also typify another dominant modernist mode, where tragedy as a poetics, tragedy as an idea and tragedy as a performance practice are all conflated under the general aura of "the Greeks". However, this analysis claims

that calling upon “the Greeks” in this context, rather than expressing a general Romantic Hellenism, is itself more concrete and embodied precisely through this emphasis on the performance conventions of tragedy. Rather than relying on the great classical philological traditions of the reception of tragedy, or on the philosophical thinking that it helped inspire, Craig and Duncan, like Brecht and Artaud, are emblematic of the modernist turn to tragedy that seeks a mode of performance that is anti-illusionist, abstract and collective in terms of its reception. In this sense, the turn to “the Greeks” rather than being nostalgic and somewhat regressive offers a license for more speculative experimentation in performance.

The emphasis on performance also brings to the fore an intense interest in and experimentation with the chorus. The philosophical entanglements with tragedy and its critical reception within modernity mostly focus on tragic subjectivity. Echoing Simon Goldhill, Miriam Leonard states that, “to be a modern critic of tragedy is to have a problem with the chorus”.⁶ But rather than posing a problem, the chorus becomes a site for some of the most innovative experiments in performance. The relationships between individual and group performance are infused by theories of acting and also dance. The emphasis on the chorus, its performative and communicative efficacy, almost always includes speculation about the audience. Again, whereas the so-called “German cast”⁷ of tragedy is mostly focused on the individual subject, and also perhaps on the individual reader, the theatrical encounter with the chorus also ignites thinking and writing about a different kind of reception, one that is aimed at the theatre audience and concerns spectatorship more generally.

This, too, stresses the fact that the split formalised by this “German cast” may contain its own complexity and ambivalence. We could claim that the principle of theatricality is already located within the somewhat schematic binary of the idea vs the aesthetic form of the tragic. From Hölderlin onwards the return to the Greeks and specifically to tragedy was not a form of nostalgia, but as Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe claims, a quest “for the grounds of theatricality”.⁸ So this idea of the tragic also engages the *praxis* of tragedy (Hölderlin’s *mechane*, Schiller’s introduction to *The Bride of Messina*, “On the Uses of the Chorus in Tragedy” of 1803, Nietzsche’s championing of ritual and music, are some characteristic examples). In turn this idea of the tragic is heavily inflected by this revived theatricality.

In this sense calling upon “the Greeks” for modernist theatre signals less of an evocation of the great philosophical ideas of the plays of tragedy, and more of a call for a re-theatricalization of the theatre arts in general. Whether denouncing the “Greeks” (Brecht, Artaud) or praising them (Craig, Duncan, T. S. Eliot, Yeats), more often than not they offer a model for a kind of theatre that we would call “total”, bringing together the literary, performing and visual arts and engaging the audience in innovative ways that radically re-work notions of empathy, estrangement and affect in general.

This expanded view of tragedy that includes literary, philosophical and performative tropes is not solely “Greek”. Although this chapter focuses on the Greek dimension of the modernist encounter with tragedy, for many of the central figures of modernist theatre, their sense of the tragic and their experimental practices are also informed by their engagement with Shakespearean tragedy. T. S. Eliot writes

adaptations of Greek Tragedy while also writing essays on Elizabethan theatre. Despite his multiple calls upon the Greeks, Craig does not stage a Greek play, but does design *Hamlet* for the notorious production directed by Konstantin Stanislavsky for the Moscow Art Theatre (1911-12).⁹ A couple of years after Brecht adapts *Antigone* he starts work on his unfinished adaptation of *Coriolanus* (1951-53), both projects accompanied by detailed notes on Epic Theatre. In his famous essay “An End to Masterpieces” (1931-36),¹⁰ Artaud denounces *Oedipus Rex* but also Shakespeare for the “decay” of modern theatre. It is beyond the scope of this chapter to trace these intricate interactions. In most cases, however, and particularly regarding the quest for a non-naturalist, “total” theatricality, Greek and Shakespearean tragedy are almost conflated.

The absence of the divine or the “Death of God”, has been hailed as one reason for the impossibility of tragedy within modernity, both as a motor for philosophical thinking *and* as a mode of performance. For the absence of the divine deprives tragedy both of its metaphysical dimension and its ritualistic discourses of performance. According to George Steiner this creates an insurmountable difficulty for modern playwrights, dooming all their attempts to failure. However, an aspect of the modernist encounter with Greek tragedy that this chapter addresses is precisely its attachment to the metaphysical and the divine (albeit in the shadow of “the Death of God”), sometimes in a heady fusion of Christianity and Greek tragedy, as in the work of T.S. Eliot, or through equally interesting fusions of Orientalism, Primitivism and Hellenism.

The intriguing interface between Hellenism and Primitivism that we find in the theatrical works of T.S. Eliot, W.B. Yeats, in Ezra Pound's and H.D.'s translations of Greek plays results both from the fascination with the theatres of South East Asia, Japan and China, and - in the case of H.D. - Egypt, and from the more direct influence of the group of charismatic Cambridge scholars, known as the Cambridge Ritualists. Although this grouping itself has been recently contested,¹¹ and although the validity of their theories is constantly re-assessed within classical studies, their impact on actual languages of performance is un-doubtable and has recently received more critical attention.¹² Gilbert Murray's translations and his involvement with actual theatrical productions,¹³ the works of Francis Cornford, Arthur Bernard Cook (with Sir James Frazer's *The Golden Bough*, providing a general theoretical context), and the work of Jane Harrison offer the modernist playwrights and theatre makers ways of reviving notions of ritual and the sacred, that are at once part of an evolutionary trajectory of theatre and quintessentially modern in their modes of production, and languages of performance. Within this group the centrality of Jane Harrison needs to be stressed both as a scholar and as a symbolic figure (and I would claim as a performer/lecturer as well). Harrison's impact on Sapphic and feminist Modernism has been well documented.¹⁴ Her work on Greek religion and art, drawing on the diverse influences of Durkheim, Darwin, nineteenth century evolutionary anthropology and theories of matriarchy, but also on modernist theories of time, like those of Bergson, and contemporary archaeological discoveries, helps to reconstruct a version of theatre, closely linked with ritual, that does not see it as simply one amongst the arts, but as *the* foundational art-form itself; one that can provide both the lost links with the past, but also help her contemporaries to understand their modernity. Julie Stone Peters has recently claimed that "her work

offered a model for modern theatre historiography” and stresses “the consequences and meaning of her work not only for twentieth-century theatre but also for the development of theatre history and (eventually) performance studies as academic disciplines”.¹⁵ In positing theatre centre-stage again the Cambridge Ritualists and particularly Harrison seem to be re-working the *theatrum mundi* metaphor and their corollaries in the theatre arts find, in their work, ways to enact this metaphor and materialize it on the stage. The Cambridge Ritualists offer methods of addressing the Platonic fear of *theatrocracy* and turning it into something positive, critical and enabling, something that has always been part of the evolutionary trajectory of being human.

This humanity, however, despite its modernity or perhaps because of it, also entails a primitivist dimension. And in the ways that the Cambridge Ritualists reconfigure the classics, this Primitivism is not read in *opposition* to Hellenism or Classicism, but is seen to inhabit the same evolutionary trajectory. These are the Greeks as Primitives as Moderns. So, when Yeats utters his aphoristic proclamation: “After us, the Savage God” after viewing the dress rehearsal of Alfred Jarry’s *Ubu Roi*, directed by Lugné-Poë in 1896, his Savage God is both primitive and modern. Significantly, this appears in an essay written years later in 1914 entitled “The Tragic Generation”.¹⁶ Of course, the use of the term “Tragic” is not coincidental here as the Greek model of theatre is the form that receives a foundational refurbishment through these modernist experiments in performance. Through the impact of the Cambridge Ritualists and, of course, Nietzsche, that Savage God is allowed to wear the mask of Dionysus. And, as Yeats himself was later to find out, this mask does not even necessarily need to be Greek; it can also be found in the theatres of the so-

called Orient or in what were termed as “primitive cultures”. This fascination with Hellenist Primitivism does not only appear as a performance trope in the more metaphysical strands of modernist performance that can be found in the work of Yeats or Eliot, but also manifests itself in the more materialist traditions, as in Brecht’s staging of *Antigone*. The interface between Hellenism and Primitivism creates enabling languages for the purposes of performance, ones that do not view the two terms in opposition but more often than not see them as interchangeable.

The “archeo-modern turn”, as Rancière terms it,¹⁷ is perhaps nowhere more prevalent than in the modernist encounter with tragedy. And it is a turn that at once revises and reconfigures the received understanding of classical tragedy as part of the past, reworks this in terms of its own present, and significantly, propels it into the future.

The rest of this chapter will look more closely at characteristic instances where modernist performance turns to Greek tragedy for thematic and formal inspiration. Experiments in the performing body, with the uses of poetry on the stage and new relationships with the audience are forged with direct reference to tragedy, as both a performance practice and a philosophical edifice. And through these a specifically modernist notion of tragedy begins to be articulated; one that may lay a claim to being faithful to the spirit of the Greeks, but these Greeks are now read primarily through Nietzsche and his radical vision for a modern Dionysus. In place of the tragic philosophical pose taken up by German Idealism and Romanticism, modernism proposes a specifically performative pose, where the tragic philosopher

morphs into the actor, the dancer, the stage designer, the director or the poet/translator.

The Dancer, the Übermarionette, and the Chorus: Isadora Duncan and Edward Gordon Craig

Craig and Duncan, both iconic figures for modernist performance, have had a huge impact throughout the twentieth century and beyond, particularly regarding theories of acting and dance. Their conceptions of the performing body have sometimes been read in opposition: complete absence of physical and psychological embodiment at one extreme and absolute expressiveness at the other. Where Craig's Übermarionette might be read as a mechanized puppet, Duncan's experiments could be said to lack technique or even form. However, we should not read them as undiluted anti-theatricality at one extreme, and as pure theatricality at the other, but rather see them as folding into each other, addressing similar issues, and presenting themselves as both Greek and modern. We can thereby consider them as doubles rather than opposites in their complex encounters with the tragic. These encounters span the whole of their creative lives, starting at the turn of the twentieth century, and in the case of Duncan cut short by her tragic death in 1927. Although beyond the scope of this volume, the legacies that both Craig and Duncan helped to create reverberate throughout the twentieth century and are still debated today. These are legacies that share a distinct "Greek" dimension, where tragedy is approached primarily for its theatricality and not for its literary and philological inheritance. For both projects versions of Greek theatre and art act as inspiration and template for their experiments. Craig finds in Greek tragedy a model for his Übermarionette and for his stage designs (and a theatre without female performers) and Duncan is inspired by both archaeological objects (the Tanagra vases) and

archaeological sites in her quest for a primal femininity that will create her modern dancer. Importantly both were also influenced by Nietzsche's reworking of Greek drama in his *The Birth of Tragedy*, as this was the book that Duncan was reading throughout her first tour of Europe (1900-4) and from the very term *Übermarionette* onwards the impact of Nietzsche reverberates throughout Craig's work.

From her account of her own family drama - "Like the family of the Atrides"¹⁸ - through her early training in the Delsarte system, to her later stay in and engagement with modern and ancient Greece, this Hellenic dimension of Duncan's art and her identity as a dancer, is at once historicizing but also radical. It helps to "free" her as a dancing woman, but also to ground her in a tradition that she sees as ancient (Figure 3.1). It fuses romance, archaeology, travel narratives, philosophy and gender politics in a gesture that could have come straight from her choreographies, remaining elusive and contradictory, almost impossible to notate.

Equally impossible to trace, other than the direct influence of *The Birth of Tragedy*, is Duncan's encounter with the texts of Greek tragedy. Rather than assessing this encounter in terms of its philological or archaeological correctness or accuracy, it might be more helpful to stress the kind of "license" to experiment that her view of the "Greeks" gave her as a female performer to radically re-work her medium. This "license" marked a distinct break from the nineteenth century "aestheticist" takes on staging the Greek plays. Gone were the cluttered costumes, the props and the antiquarianism. Significantly, and tracing a reciprocal relationship with the Cambridge Ritualists, for Jane Harrison (who read texts from Homer and Theocritus during Duncan's London début on March 16th, 1900) Duncan's vitalist,

non-decorous dances would have chimed well with her own research into the relationships between religion and ritual, movement and rhythm. The fact that Duncan's work had a specific feminine perspective would also have been attractive to Harrison, whose reading of Dionysus and the *eniautos daimon* too has been read by contemporary scholars like Martha Carpentier as partaking in both the late-nineteenth century Bachofen-inspired vitalist quest for a primal matriarchy and in the more radical discourses of Sapphic modernism.

The Birth of Tragedy acts as an inspiration for both women. Nietzsche's emphasis on the power of ritual, rhythm and collectivity, prioritizing ritual over narrative, and the chorus over the protagonist helps Harrison to radically re-conceptualize tragedy within the discipline of classics and Duncan's work, we can claim, may offer an aesthetic, performative parallel to the writing of the Cambridge Ritualists in general. Duncan called Nietzsche's first book 'my bible',¹⁹ and in one of her early essays on dance she writes in terms that reverberated with echoes from that book, "To give back to the dance its place as the Chorus, that is the ideal. When I have danced I have tried always to be the Chorus... I have never once danced a solo."²⁰

But, of course, she *did* dance solo. This idea of the performer, that Duncan creatively interprets from Nietzsche somehow aspires to override the gap between the individual protagonist and the chorus. Similarly, Craig's famous aphoristic call for the banishing of the actor from the stage cannot be read literally. And, it too, somewhat incongruously can be seen to have a distinct "Greek" or even specifically tragic dimension. For both artists and theorists of performance this "Greek" aspect

introduces a highly experimental and significantly utopian aspect to their work. Duncan's dances are impossible to notate (or problematize the whole notion of notation), while Craig's Übermarionette remained unrealizable, a phantasmic creation, there to offer a locus for speculative experimentation, rather than a concrete example to be emulated.

Craig's essay, "The Actor and the Übermarionette" (1908),²¹ hugely influential since it first appeared, is framed by three significant quotations that at once attest to its modernism and to its neo-classicism. Firstly, the essay is prefaced by an aphoristic epigram by Eleanora Duse: "To save the Theatre, the Theatre must be destroyed, the actors and actresses must all die of the plague... They make art impossible". This gesture of catastrophe is followed by Duse's equally demanding call for "a return to the Greeks". Craig's own designs for Duse's *Electra* (another project that was never realized) exhibit such a fusion of classical and modern.²² The second quotation that appears in note form is the famous quotation from Plato's *Republic*, where through the guise of the rhapsode, Plato denounces mimesis in general.²³ How fitting that Craig uses this iconic passage – one that has generated so much philosophical reflection about mimesis – to frame and to also justify his own theories about the Übermarionette. Like Plato, he too is concerned about the power of the actor to distort reality and to *mesmerize*, to act as a kind of charismatic demagogue who threatens the political order. And as in Plato this power of the theatre and theatricality is seen to be at the core of the problem of mimesis itself. To do full justice to the debate in the third quotation of his essay Craig also calls upon Aristotle in support of his manifesto for the actor, or more generally we could claim for a modern theatre. The quotation, again in a note, he uses from Aristotle is the equally famous passage from *Poetics*, where the "spectacle" is denounced as the

work of “the stage machinist” rather than the poet, and where tragedy “is felt even apart from representation and actors”.²⁴ With Duse’s epigram at the start they serve to frame his manifesto, to give it a historical lineage and to theatricalize it. So, when Craig calls upon the Greeks to help him construct and articulate his argument, he is not simply being nostalgic, calling upon a unifying and homogenizing rhetoric that would give his argument the aura of the classical. In many ways he is calling upon the Greeks as both a philosopher and a theatre maker. Indeed, his own essay may be said to rehearse the ancient quarrel itself. As in Plato and Aristotle this quarrel is given shape and form through the workings of theatre and in particular is located on the performing body.

Although Craig was Max Reinhardt’s first choice of designer for his famous production of *Oedipus Rex* (1923),²⁵ that collaboration was not fruitful, and apart from his designs for Eleanora Duse’s *Electra* Craig never worked directly on a Greek play. However, he did work on the famous production of Konstantin Stanislavsky’s *Hamlet* (1911-12) for The Moscow Art Theatre. Looking at the designs in the *book beautiful* that resulted from that failed collaboration, *The Cranach Hamlet* (1930), and Craig’s designs for theatrical characters (Figure 3.2) in his splendid collection entitled *Black Figures* (1989), it appears that his ideas of the tragic protagonist were indeed put to practice in the production of the Moscow *Hamlet*. Despite its received failure at the time, the Moscow *Hamlet* has since occupied an almost mythical position within twentieth century theatre historiography, as a quintessential modernist experiment in designing and acting Shakespeare.²⁶ The theatricality of this *Hamlet*, however, was heavily influenced by Craig’s views of Greek tragedy.

Both Craig's and Duncan's work is somewhat plagued by discourses of failure and unperformability, and in Duncan's case the inability to reproduce and notate. It might be more critically and interpretatively helpful to see their work as more experimental and speculative, open to the liveness, risk and ephemerality of performance. And this aspect of their work may be linked to its "Greekness", where the encounter with Greek tragedy rather than adding the aura, the cultural currency, the authenticity and monumentality that is traditionally associated with the classics, creates work that is more evocative, speculative, and utopian, work that intentionally or not celebrates its resistance to reproduction and notation.

Poetry and Translation: T.S Eliot, W. B Yeats, Ezra Pound

Greek tragedy as a source for modernist experimentation with the performing body (as protagonist or chorus), is also crucial in debates about poetry on stage. Usually the concerns about the representational efficacy of the performing body are parallel to the writing and thinking about the possibility of poetic drama. When central modernist figures, mostly poets, turn to the stage in their quest for both "poetry *in* the theatre" and "poetry *of* the theatre",²⁷ they also turn to tragedy. However, this turn has now been informed by their exposure to the radical work of the Cambridge ritualists and the Noh theatre. T. S Eliot, W. B. Yeats and Ezra Pound all undertake translations and / or adaptations of Greek tragedy; in the process their attempts also gesture towards new notions of translation. All three leading modernist poets propose new ideas and practices about the function of translation itself. Problems of translating prosody and literary form are matched by equally challenging issues about performance.

Throughout his writing life Eliot was pre-occupied with the issues of translating and adapting Greek tragedy and the possibilities this presented for poetic drama. Eliot's famous attack on Gilbert Murray's translations was primarily based on what Eliot considered appropriate use of poetry in the English language. He wrote "Greek poetry will never have the slightest vitalizing effect upon English poetry if it can only appear masquerading as a vulgar debasement of the eminently personal idiom of Swinburne".²⁸ For Eliot the path that Greek tragedy was to follow in order to have the required "vitalizing effect" on English poetry was primarily through experimentation. Crucially this experimentation was both linguistic and theatrical.

Eliot's forays into Greek tragedy as a form of contemporary poetic drama are paralleled by his equal interest in matters of staging, and particularly the staging of the chorus. After his attack on Murray (1920), Pound dared Eliot to translate the *Agamemnon*, a venture he was to take up himself, with both men eventually abandoning the task.²⁹ Perhaps this initial unsuccessful attempt shaped their later engagements with Greek tragedy; Eliot would write mainly heavily disguised adaptations and Pound would translate Sophocles. Before Eliot wrote his drawing room adaptations of Greek tragedy, *The Family Reunion* (1939), *The Cocktail Party* (1949), *The Confidential Clerk* (1952), and *The Elder Statesman* (1954), he wrote the two fragments of *Sweeney Agonistes* (1926), as an attempt to combine Aristophanic comedy with music hall style-verse, and his early plays *The Rock* (1934) and *Murder in the Cathedral* (1935). Of these *Murder in the Cathedral* presents a fascinating attempt at a modernist Greek tragedy. It is an attempt that at once engages the idea of tragedy, re-working it through Christian theology, and the

formal demands of training actors and chorus, while also dealing with audience reception. It presents what some scholars (including George Steiner) would consider an impossibility: a Christian tragedy.

Eliot's conflation of a Christian martyr (Thomas Becket) with the tragic protagonist, and the tragic chorus with the chorus of the women of Canterbury, can be read as a direct result of the influence of the Cambridge Ritualists and their ritualistic, evolutionary model of drama. He writes in *The Criterion* in 1923 in an article entitled "Dramatis Personae" in terms that echo the writings of the Cambridge ritualists:

Instead of pretending that the stage gesture is a copy of reality, let us adopt a literal untruth, a thorough-going convention, a ritual. For the stage – not only in its remote origins, but always – is a ritual, and the failure of the contemporary stage to satisfy the craving for ritual is one of the reasons why it is not a living art.³⁰

Eliot was also familiar with the work of Craig and his writing on acting. He had read Craig's *The Art of the Theatre* (1905) while an undergraduate and was well versed in the debates about puppets and actors (he had defended Craig in an article in *The Dial* in 1921). The invitation from the Friends of Canterbury Cathedral to write a play,³¹ allowed Eliot to bring together his experiments in poetic drama, with his interest in reviving Greek tragedy through both the prisms of Christianity *and* modernism. This attempt offered Eliot the opportunity to address the "problem of the chorus". Although it is viewed by most philosophical critics as the quintessential anti-

modern aspect of Greek tragedy, modernist experiments in performance find in the Greek chorus a space (both conceptual and physical) to rehearse new theories of acting and audience reception. Here is Eliot, talking about the uses of the chorus in *Murder in the Cathedral*:

In making use of [the chorus] we do not aim to *copy* Greek drama. There is a good deal about the Greek theatre that we do not know, and never shall know. But we know that some of its conventions cannot be ours. The characters talk too long; the Chorus has too much to say and holds up the action; usually not enough happens; and the Greek notion of climax is not ours. But the chorus has always fundamentally the same uses. It mediates between the action and the audience; it intensifies the action by projecting its emotional consequences, so that we as the audience see it doubly, by seeing its effect on other people.³²

This is a sophisticated reading of the chorus both in terms of what it can offer theatrically and for the ways that Eliot considers it strange (“never shall know”). It posits the chorus as a mode of mediation that enables a kind of “double vision” in the audience. This meta-theatrical, and quotational use of the chorus, as commenting both on the action and on the audience, is a trope that many modernist theatre makers will employ (including Brecht and Artaud). For Eliot it marks the beginning of his experiments with the chorus, always parallel to those in poetic drama, that continued throughout his life. These choruses help create a modernist version of tragedy that is at once a Christian liturgical drama.

Eliot was well aware that he could not repeat the success of *Murder in the Cathedral* partly because he could not repeat these stylized, ritualistic choruses and partly because in his later ventures he could not have access to that “organic audience” that participated in the play as a religious experience, as the play was created specifically for the congregation of Canterbury Cathedral. He claims that “for a beginner... the path was made easy” and attributes this to three main factors: the subject matter was “generally admitted to be suitable for verse”; the play was produced “for a rather special kind of audience”; and “finally it was a religious play”.³³ These three factors - heightened language, an “organic” audience and the play as a religious experience - characterize Greek tragedy and present the most demanding challenges for modernist theatre makers. As Eliot could not necessarily count on repeating this experience with his other Greek plays, he followed a slightly different path.

The Family Reunion (1939), Eliot’s next play, which was to be his re-working of *The Oresteia*, offered him the opportunity to further experiment with modern tragedy. Unlike *Murder in the Cathedral*, henceforth Eliot deliberately chooses contemporary themes, drastically re-works the chorus, and continues his experiments with poetry on the stage. Indeed, the drawing-room dramas that followed (*The Cocktail Party*, *The Confidential Clerk*, *The Elder Statesman*), while all being adaptations of Greek plays, strive to carefully disguise their sources. This is so much the case that Eliot claimed in his apologia for poetic drama, *Poetry and Drama*:

You will understand, after my making these criticisms of *The Family Reunion*, some of the errors that I endeavored to avoid in designing *The Cocktail Party*.

To begin with, no chorus, no ghosts. I was still inclined to go to a Greek dramatist for my theme, but I was determined to do so merely as a point of departure, and to conceal the origins so well that nobody would identify them until I pointed them out myself. In this at least I have been successful; for no one of my acquaintance (and no dramatic critics) recognized the source of my story in the *Alcestis* of Euripides.³⁴

His version of *Alcestis* morphed into *The Cocktail Party*. Despite Eliot's attempts to hide the source plays, and perhaps partly due to his "anxiety of influence", these engagements with tragedy throw up for him fascinating challenges regarding modern tragedy in general. Eliot departs from the original Greek dactylic trimeter in search of a rhythm that he deemed to be close to his contemporary speech, deciding to employ "a line of varying length and varying number of syllables, with a caesura and three spaces".³⁵ While this proved quite useful for expressing a heightened form of upper-class, drawing room English, it also proved quite limiting. What was significant for Eliot, however, was the quest (contra Murray, as he believed) for a tragic language that would help revitalize the poetic aspects of English. He aspired "to bring poetry into the world in which the audience lives and to which it returns when it leaves the theatre" so "that the audience should find, at the moment of awareness that it is hearing poetry, that it is saying to itself: 'I could talk in poetry too!'"³⁶ The function of poetry here is one of redemption and elevation. According to Eliot it should influence through rhythm in an unconscious manner, prompting the audience itself to speak poetry. In many ways this smacks of condescension, ignoring the fact that the audience might already speak in a form of its own poetry even before being initiated by Eliot's poetic dramas. And initiation was still on Eliot's mind, for despite

the diminishing of the chorus, and the emphasis on quasi-poetic, everyday language, these plays still represent his ambitious attempts at creating Christian tragedies in a modernist cast. Characteristic of this fusion of Christianity and Greek tragedy is Eliot's highly evocative reflection about Harry's relationship (the Orestes character in *The Family Reunion*) to the chorus. As he states in a letter to E. Martin Browne who was about to produce the play, "he follows the Furies as immediately and as unintelligibly as the Disciples dropping their nets".³⁷ This extraordinary phrase conflates Christ and Dionysus, and reads the passion of Christ itself as a tragedy.

Such a conflation of Christ and Dionysus also appears in W. B. Yeats's play *Resurrection* (1927), which presents in the form of questions and answers (antiphones perhaps) a discussion about the nature of Christ among three emblematic figures: a Greek, a Hebrew, and a Syrian (or Egyptian in the *Adelphi* version). This debate is threatened by an off-stage ecstatic chorus of Dionysus, which is performing horrific rituals. This brief play which combines prose and verse exhibits many of the traits that were to characterize Yeatsian drama: it features a chorus of musicians, it uses the mask, the folding and unfolding of the curtain, and it was specifically written for a small studio audience such as that of The Peacock Theatre (the smaller theatre of The Abbey). Here is the opening song that, as Yeats states in his directions, is for "the folding and the unfolding of the curtain":

I saw a staring virgin stand
Where holy Dionysus died,
And tear the heart out of his side,
And lay the heart upon her hand

And bear that beating heart away;
And then did all the Muses sing
Of Magnus Anus at the spring,
As though God's death were but a play.³⁸

All these formal aspects are borrowed from the Noh, and have parallels in Yeats's earlier *Four Plays for Dancers* (*At the Hawk's Well*, 1917; *The Only Jealousy of Emer*, 1919; *The Dreaming of the Bones*, 1919; *Calvary*, 1920). Yeats had spent considerable time with Pound in Sussex in 1913 familiarizing himself with the Fenollosa Noh manuscript, and witnessing performances by the Japanese dancer Michio Ito. *Resurrection* is dedicated to a Japanese admirer called Junzo Sato. However, Yeats's theatre of this period is not solely influenced by the Noh tradition. While he is writing *Resurrection* he also returns to a project that he would pursue for many years: the translations of *Oedipus the King* and *Oedipus at Colonus*. (He had initially attempted and abandoned a verse translation of *Oedipus the King* back in 1904). The Greek translations allowed him to bring together his modernist concerns and his quest for a national literature. "I had three interests: interest in a form of literature, in a form of philosophy, and belief in nationality."³⁹ he claimed later in *Explorations*, reflecting on this period.

The Oedipus plays offered Yeats the possibility of experimenting with poetic language and theatricality on stage as part of his quest for a national theatre. This theatricality was a fusion of his inspiration from Noh combined with the ideas of ritual from the work of the Cambridge Ritualists. Yeats, too, had already worked with Edward Gordon Craig, who had designed The Abbey's production of *The Hour Glass*

in 1911. The language that Yeats chose in his translations was a combination of prose and verse (prose for the protagonist and verse for the chorus). The quest for a language that could speak to the big national themes and attract large audiences fits in quite neatly with Yeats's fascination with the oral and popular tradition. Yeats, like Eliot and Pound, views the difficulty of reviving the poetry of the Greek plays as a general symptom of a modernist "malaise", a world where language has been debased and lost its "organic" links with a living community. Yeats finds the alternative, ideal audience on the Aran islands, and in line with many of the linguistic experiments of the Celtic Twilight (also undertaken by J. M. Synge and later Louise MacNeice who translates *Agamemnon* in 1937), uses rhythms and patterns that he considers to be part of an organic community, that somehow has not been marred by modernity. This approach to translation sees the Greek plays as a way of reviving an eternal and living popular culture. In this sense the difficulty that the use of prosody presents for translators of Greek plays is seen as part and parcel of a lost unity, one that perhaps the Greek plays may help to rejuvenate. So a nostalgic fantasy for what Yeats sees as the organic culture epitomized by Greek tragedy prompts him to turn to the popular Irish tradition, combining it with an intriguing fusion of Noh and classicism. The poetry and the theatricality of ancient tragedy find the possibility of resurrection (to borrow Yeats's title) in an energizing concoction of Orientalism and Primitivism.

This is a combination that proves useful for Ezra Pound too in his translations of Sophocles. He writes in his Preface to his *Women of Trachis*:

The *Trachiniae* presents the highest peak of Greek sensibility registered in any of the Plays that have come down to us and is, at the same time, nearest to the original form of the God-Dance.

A version for KITANO KATUE, hoping he will use it on my dear old friend Michio Ito, or take it to the Minoru if they can be persuaded to add it to their repertoire.⁴⁰

Pound did not get the opportunity to put these ideas into practice as this translation was first performed on BBC radio's Third Programme. Although this translation appears much later than those of Eliot and Yeats it is still in dialogue with their projects, and continues to echo the terminology of the Cambridge Ritualists (God-Dance). In the same gesture Pound's hailing of Ito as the ideal performer for his *Trachiniae* (in the role of Hercules one presumes) underlines the parallels that were drawn between the *dromenon* of the Greeks and the ritualistic aspect of Noh drama. For Pound, it is this combination of a ritualistic reading of tragedy, as seen in the figure of the God-Dance, with the conventions of stylized embodiment presented by the Noh that offered ways of reviving Greek tragedy. A modernist theatre aesthetic would combine all these sources in a manner that is clear, hard, concrete, and in all other ways imagistic.

This imagistic take is also evident in Pound's earlier attempt at translating Sophocles in his version of *Electra*, an extraordinary linguistic fusion of sources, references, registers and dialects. Pound's version contains transliterated Greek, and uses various forms of English (African American, Scots, archaic English lyrics, Cockney, to name a few). This recourse to linguistic register and dialect can be read

as part of the quest for an authentic and organic language. Pound's translations, however, may have the opposite effect, one of strangeness and distancing, where the categories of the "primitive" and the "classical", language and dialect are confused and interchangeable. An example of this modernist take on translation follows from the ending of the play with Orestes pronouncing, as he leads Aegisthus to his death:

No, but you aren't dying for pleasure
You've got to go thru with it ALL.
It's a pity you can't all of you – die like this
And as quickly, everyone like you
It wd/save a lot of unpleasantness.

Chorus (sings)

O SPERM ATREOS

Atreides, Atreides

Come thru the dark,

(speaks)

my god, it's come with a rush

(sings)

Delivered, Delivered,

TEI NUN HORMEI TELEOOTHEN

Swift end

So soon.⁴¹

The way this sequence reads *and* looks on the page is parallel to Pound's imagist experiments in poetry, and particularly in the *Cantos*. The ways that Pound uses the transliterated Greek through this version creates a relationship with the original that raises more general questions about translatability. Several scholars have pointed out that Pound's use of Greek is more in a primitivist vein, where the Greek is used to "present mad or 'primitive' speech, curses or voices from the underworld",⁴² or in sequences that express the inability of Electra to mourn. This attitude towards the language of tragedy presents quite a departure from those of Eliot and Yeats. Here the linguistic variations used, including the transliterations, rather than reuniting Pound's present (and ours) with a reconciled, identified, and organic classicism, confront us with a Hellenism that is ritualistic, fragmented, savage and strange. And possibly more so in Pound's versions than in Eliot's or Yeats's, Greek tragedy emerges as at once primitive and modern.

The linguistic "difficulty" of Pound's translation is parallel to the issue of performability. His own references to the Noh present an attempt to address this, but may perhaps also raise the spectre of unperformability that haunts most of these modernist encounters with Greek tragedy. David Wiles claims that, "it is exactly half a century since *Women of Trachis* appeared, and we are still waiting for a set of theatrical conventions to emerge that will make this modernist text finally playable".⁴³ Perhaps another way of reading the "unperformability" of these plays, is not so much as part of an empirical quest for more new and innovative stage conventions, but as a reflection on what Rancière considers endemic to the archeo-modern turn: the category of anticipation (still waiting, Wiles states above). Rancière claims that this "archaeomodern turn [...] is located at the core of the modern project" and "sets up

two categories: that of figurative reason or of sleeping meaning, and the temporal category of anticipation".⁴⁴ So, this attitude towards the Greeks is possibly about the past but probably has more to say about the aesthetics of utopia. In this sense, these experimental, modernist takes on Greek tragedy, do not solely gesture towards their immediate chronological futures, but perhaps towards the category of the future in general, i.e. towards all futures. Rather than waiting for the stage to "catch up" as it were (although this too is possible), they may offer a kind of performative gesture in and of themselves, fusing the textual and the non-textual, and creating a relationship with Greek tragedy that is more like a laboratory for experiment than a programmatic declaration on how to write and perform modern tragedies.

Brecht: estrangement and history

Bertolt Brecht, modernist theatre's chief proponent in approaching the stage as a laboratory for both aesthetic and political experiments, aligns his project in *opposition* to Greek tragedy, or at least what he understands as its Aristotelean theorization. "We know that the barbarians have their art. Let us create another", he blasts in aphoristic style in his manifesto for a modern, Epic theatre, *A Short Organum for the Theatre* (1947-48).⁴⁵ And following the mode of epic re-writing and inversion, the "barbarians" here are "the Greeks" themselves. Rather than representing the spirit of critique and radical theatricality traced above, for Brecht the reception of Greek tragedy as part of the canonical neo-classical tradition is viewed as contributing to the failures of the project of the Enlightenment, its philosophy, its ideology and its economies of representation. His own quest for an Epic Theatre is the counterpart or "cure" to the "failure" of tragedy to address the demands of

modernity. Yet Brecht's relationship to Greek tragedy (and to Shakespearean tragedy for that matter) is more contradictory and nuanced than his own "crude" (to use his term) manifesto writings call for. His abhorrence of Greek tragedy ("Barbaric delights. Human sacrifices all round!")⁴⁶ is matched by an equally strong attraction to it, as can be evidenced in his first production after his exile and return to Europe after WWII. This was *The Antigone of Sophocles* based on a text by Hölderlin, with stage designs by Caspar Neher. Ruth Berlau was to photograph the process, formulating the first of what was to become the hallmark of the Brechtian project: the *model*. It is somewhat counter-intuitive that the first *model* for an Epic Theatre should be based on this iconic Greek tragedy. However, the play is radically re-visioned not only through Hölderlin, but also through the conventions of Epic theatre. The *model* itself attests to Brecht's desire to address the issues of translatability and performability associated in a sense with every modern attempt to stage Greek tragedy. And Ruth Berlau's photographs creating the *model* may be read as addressing the whole issue of the reproducibility of performance itself (Figure 3.3). Almost against the grain of his own proclamations, Brecht's and Berlau's *Antigone-Model* highlights what I would claim is a fundamental characteristic of Greek tragedy: its adaptability.

In some ways Brecht's *Antigone-Model* could be seen as a reflection on and extension of Walter Benjamin's idea of translatability, where the encounter with the original always brings out a strangeness in the so-called target language. However, it also secures ways in which this original is re-born. "The life of the original" states Benjamin, "attains in them [the translations] to its ever renewed latest and most abundant flowering".⁴⁷ Like performability, Benjamin claims, "the translatability of linguistic creations ought to be considered even if men should prove unable to

translate them". Of course, for him, the prime examples of this process can be seen in Hölderlin's translations of Sophocles, ridiculed when they appeared for their inconsistencies and errors. "Hölderlin's translations are prototypes of their kind; they are even the most perfect renderings of their texts as a prototype is to a model".⁴⁸

The model for Hölderlin, as it was for Pound, was Greek tragedy. And in this context we can view Hölderlin's translations as precursors to Pound's linguistic experiments *and* Brecht's theatrical ones. In many ways influenced by both Hölderlin and Benjamin, Brecht confronts the issues of translatability and performability in tandem. His model is neither simply a record of a performance nor is it a programmatic set of directions that are meant to be repeated. Rather, following Benjamin, it relies on the principle of *reproducibility* and not reproduction, in ways that echo the principle of *translatability* that does not simply transfer a Greek play (following Hölderlin) into a modern language, but creates it anew in a double movement that re-writes and estranges both the original and the target language.

Brecht's *Antigone-Model* presents one of modernist theatre's most ambitious and far-reaching attempts to create a "text", both visual and linguistic, for performance. Significantly, Brecht approaches this endeavor through Sophocles' iconic play in a gesture that both relies on and radically re-works the legacies of German Idealism. The most classical of Greek plays becomes through Hölderlin, Brecht and Berlau, the model for the most modernist of theatres: Epic Theatre. This use of tragedy presents at once a reflection on modernist neo-classicism and challenges modernism's fascination with the "new". Brecht is very conscious of this function of the model as looking both back towards the past but also as questioning

modernism's fixation on "newness". He writes in his Notes to *The Antigone-Model*, "The idea of making use of models is a clear challenge to the artists of a period that applaud nothing but what is 'original', 'incomparable', 'never been seen before', and demands what is 'unique' ".⁴⁹ And in this way, we can also claim that it, too, enacts the "archeo-modern turn", looking towards the past but also anticipating a potential future.

Artaud: ritual and metaphysics

Antonin Artaud can be seen as Brecht's counterpart in modernist performance. Where Brecht is in search of a political, historical form of theatre to address the demands of the early twentieth century and its historical catastrophes, Artaud approaches those same demands through a theatre that is ritualist and mytho-poetic. Brecht's dialectic materialism is seen in binary opposition to Artaud's apocalyptic metaphysics. This is a binary that many contemporary performance theorists have challenged (Anthony Tatlow,⁵⁰ Hans-Thies Lehmann⁵¹); significantly it has been also been challenged in creative ways by many theatre directors (Ariane Mnouchkine, Jan Fabre, Richard Schechner, Theodoros Terzopoulos) especially in their productions of Greek tragedy.

Like Brecht, Artaud conceptualizes his Theatre of Cruelty (1932) against the "masterpieces" of Greek tragedy. Specifically, in "An End to Masterpieces"⁵² he chooses another iconic tragedy, *Oedipus Rex*, to help him articulate his aphoristic, apocalyptic and eschatological vision of theatre. It is a very specific view of Greek tragedy that Artaud is writing against. His critique focuses on the language of tragedy. He writes, "Sophocles speaks grandly perhaps, but in a manner that is no

longer relevant to the age”, and “in costumes and language which have lost all contact with the crude and epileptic rhythm of our time”.⁵³ Like Brecht, Artaud identifies Greek (and Shakespearean) tragedy with tradition, regression and conservatism. It is unable to speak to “a mass audience that trembles at train wrecks, that is familiar with earthquakes, plague, revolution, war”.⁵⁴ And like Brecht, he had very little direct knowledge of the texts themselves. Still, the image of the “plague”, such a potent metaphor for all of Artaud’s writing, can be read as borrowed from *Oedipus Rex*.⁵⁵ Like Pound, Yeats and Brecht, Artaud finds in the performance traditions of the “Orient” (in his case it is Balinese Dance) or in Primitivism (through his visits to the Aron islands and Mexico) conventions that allow for experimentation in non-psychological, non-mimetic acting. And this somewhat ambivalent and contradictory relationship with tragedy, that Artaud expresses, is addressed in performance by many visionary directors of the twentieth century and beyond. Artaud’s Theatre of Cruelty has proved inspirational in approaching Greek tragedy as an embodied, ritualistic and metaphysical mode of theatre. His own formulations for a form of total theatre that is collective, ritualistic and relies on sacrifice and violence has been formative for theatre makers of the late twentieth century and beyond, who view tragedy as a form of post-dramatic theatre (Hans Thies Lehmann)⁵⁶; a performance mode that does not rely on the play text, but opens up a liminal space to explore ideas of embodiment and collective experience. This view of tragedy as a performance event that opens up metaphysical and mythopoetic but also political and historical themes through collective, sometimes immersive experiences for the audience has a distinct Artaudian genealogy. Ariane Mnouchkine, Jan Fabre, and Theodoros Terzopoulos are just a few of the contemporary directors who approach Greek tragedy through an Artaudian lens, sometimes also informed by Brechtian

aesthetics. In their productions of Greek tragedies Brecht and Artaud appear as doubles, indeed almost in the way Artaud understands the function of the double in the theatre.

Many of the projects we have approached in this chapter are haunted by the specter of failure. Brecht's *The Antigone of Sophocles* had a limited run in the theatre;⁵⁷ Craig produced nothing after the received disaster of the Moscow *Hamlet*; apart from *Murder in the Cathedral*, Eliot's modern tragedies have been deemed unperformable by critics and performers alike; Pound's translations have only recently received the critical attention they deserve. Somewhat counterintuitively considering their scathing attacks on tragedy, Brecht and Artaud have had the most impact on the post-war and contemporary reception of tragedy both in theoretical writings and in production.

Yet these modernist approaches to tragedy, however speculative and "unsuccessful", have helped to create an experimental, laboratory *topos* that radically re-conceptualizes our understanding of the form. The nineteenth-century figures of the classical philologist and the philosopher are augmented by the figure of the theatre maker who is both a poet of the theatre and a poet in the theatre. The aestheticizing impulse that tragedy adds to the tradition of primarily German Idealism is continued throughout all these modernist encounters with tragedy, and the dominating figure of the philosopher is shadowed, or doubled by the figures of the actor, the dancer, the scenographer and primarily by the director. In this way, modernism's encounter with the oldest form of theatre in the European tradition

contributes to the articulation of theatre's quintessentially modernist ideal: the autonomy of performance.

These approaches have helped to create a genealogy in the reception of tragedy that may allow us to read late twentieth century adaptations of Sophocles like *The Gospel at Colonus* (1983) by Lee Breuer as a continuation of T. S. Eliot's attempts at a Christian tragedy, or Yukio Ninagawa's Noh and Kabuki inspired productions of Greek tragedy, like *Medea* (1985), as elaborating on the work of Pound and Yeats, Heiner Müller's *machines* as versions of Brecht's models, and Theodoros Terzopoulos' and Jan Fabre's radical performances of tragedy as a conflation of Epic Theatre and Theatre of Cruelty. Perhaps equally importantly for a cultural history of tragedy these modernist encounters have helped to expand the critical vocabulary of tragedy and have created a laboratory space for experiments in tragedy as performance.

Notes

¹ Peter Szondi, *An Essay on the Tragic*, trans. Paul Fleming (Stanford, CA: Meridian: Crossing Aesthetics, Stanford University Press, 2002), 1.

² Miriam Leonard, *Tragic Modernities* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015), 43.

³ George Steiner, *The Death of Tragedy* (London: Faber & Faber, 1961).

⁴ Jacques Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics: The Distribution of the Sensible*, trans. & ed. Gabriel Rockhill (2004; London and New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013), 7-15; also see *Aisthesis: Scenes from the Aesthetic Regime of Art*, trans. Paul Zakir (London and New York: Verso), ix-xii.

⁵ Walter Benjamin, "The Task of the Translator," in *Illuminations*, trans. H. Zohn, ed. & intro. Hannah Arendt (1923; London: Fontana, 1992), 70-82.

⁶ Leonard, *Tragic Modernities*, 132.

⁷ See Stephen Halliwell, *The Aesthetics of Mimesis: Ancient Texts and Modern Problems* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 99.

⁸ Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, "Hölderlin's Theatre", in *Tragedy and Philosophy*, eds. Miguel de Beistegui and Simon Sparks (London: Routledge), 118-9.

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- ⁹ Laurence Senelick, *Gordon Craig's Moscow Hamlet; A Reconstruction* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood, Praeger, 1982).
- ¹⁰ Antonin Artaud, *Collected Works Vol. 4*, trans. Victor Corti (London: Calder and Boyars, 1968), 252-9.
- ¹¹ Mary Beard, *The Invention of Jane Harrison* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000).
- ¹² Robert Ackerman, *The Myth and Ritual School: J. G. Frazer and the Cambridge Ritualists* (1991; London: Routledge, 2002).
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- ¹⁴ Martha Carpentier, *Ritual, Myth and the Modernist Text: The Influence of Jane Ellen Harrison on Joyce, Eliot and Woolf* (London: Routledge, 1998).
- ¹⁵ Julie Stone Peters, "Jane Harrison and the Savage Dionysus: Archaeological Voyages, Ritual Origins, Anthropology, and the Modern Theatre", *Modern Drama* 51, no. 1 (2008): 1-41.
- ¹⁶ W. B. Yeats, "The Tragic Generation", in *Autobiographies* (1914; London: Macmillan, 1955), 279-348.
- ¹⁷ Jacques Rancière, "The Archaeomodern Turn", in *Walter Benjamin and the Demands of History*, ed. Michael P. Steinberg (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996), 24-40. This argument is developed in Vassiliki Kolocotroni, "Still Life: Modernism's Turn to Greece", *Journal of Modern Literature* 35, no. 2 (2012): 1-24.
- ¹⁸ Isadora Duncan, *My Life* (1927; New York: Liveright, 1996), 5.
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 35.
- ²⁰ *Ibid.*, 69.
- ²¹ Craig, Edward Gordon, "The Actor and the Übermarionette", in *The Mask* 1, no. 2, (Florence: The Arena Goldoni, 1908), reissued with index by Lorelei Guidry, (New York: Benjamin Blom, 1967).
- ²² L. M. Newman, *Edward Gordon Craig, Black Figures: 105 Reproductions with an Unpublished Essay* (Wellingborough: Christopher Skelton, 1989).
- ²³ Plato, *Republic*, III, 395. Qtd. in *The Mask* 1, no. 1, 5.
- ²⁴ Aristotle, *Poetics*, VI, 19 and XXVI, 1-4, Qtd. in *The Mask* 1, no. 1, 11.
- ²⁵ L. M. Newman, "Reinhardt and Craig?", in *Max Reinhardt: the Oxford Symposium*, eds. Margaret Jakobs and John Warren (Oxford: Oxford Polytechnic, 1986), 6-15, 8.
- ²⁶ Senelick, *Gordon Craig's Moscow Hamlet: A Reconstruction*.
- ²⁷ Jean Cocteau, "Preface to *The Wedding on the Eiffel Tower*", in *Modern French Plays: An Anthology from Jarry to Ionesco*, trans. Michael Benedikt (1922; London: Faber and Faber, 1964), 96-7.
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- ²⁹ Ezra Pound, *Guide to Kulcher* (1938; New York: New Directions, 1970), 93.
- ³⁰ T. S. Eliot, "Dramatis Personae", in *Complete Prose of T. S. Eliot, Vol. 2*, 430-4, 434.
- ³¹ E. Martin Browne, *The Making of T. S. Eliot's Plays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 34-79.
- ³² T. S. Eliot Qtd in David E. Jones, *The Plays of T. S. Eliot* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1960), 52.

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- ³³ T. S. Eliot, "Poetry and Drama", in *Selected Prose of T. S. Eliot*, ed. Frank Kermode (1951; New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1975), 132-147, 139.
- ³⁴ Ibid., 144.
- ³⁵ Ibid., 141
- ³⁶ Ibid., 141
- ³⁷ T. S. Eliot, Qtd in Browne, *The Making of T. S. Eliot's Plays*, 108.
- ³⁸ W. B. Yeats, *The Collected Works of W. B. Yeats, Vol. II The Plays*, eds. David R. Clark and Rosalind E. Clark (New York: Scribner, 2001), 481-2.
- ³⁹ W. B. Yeats, *Explorations* (London: Macmillan, 1962), 263.
- ⁴⁰ Ezra Pound, *Women of Trachis, A Version by Ezra Pound* (London: Faber and Faber, 1956), ii.
- ⁴¹ Ezra Pound and Rudd Fleming, *Sophokles, Electra, A Version by Ezra Pound and Rudd Fleming*, ed. Carey Perloff (New York: New Directions Books, 1990), 73.
- ⁴² Katerina Stergiopoulou, "'And a Good Job'? Elektrifying English at St. Elizabeth's", *Journal of Modern Literature* 39, no. 1 (2015): 87-111, 100.
- ⁴³ David Wiles, "Sophoclean Diptychs: Modern Translations of Dramatic Poetry," *A Journal of Humanities and the Classics* 13, no. 1 (2005): 9-26, 17.
- ⁴⁴ Jacques Rancière, "The Archaeomodern Turn", 28-9.
- ⁴⁵ Bertolt Brecht, "A Short Organum for the Theatre", in *Brecht on Theatre*, trans. & ed. John Willett (1957; London: Methuen, 1964), 180.
- ⁴⁶ Ibid., 189.
- ⁴⁷ Walter Benjamin, "The Task of the Translator", 72.
- ⁴⁸ Ibid., 82.
- ⁴⁹ Bertolt Brecht, "Texts by Brecht", in *Brecht, Collected Plays Vol 8*, ed. Tom Kuhn and David Constantine (London: Methuen, 2003), 209.
- ⁵⁰ Anthony Tatlow, *Brecht, Shakespeare and the Intercultural Sign* (Durham, US: Duke University Press, 2001).
- ⁵¹ Han-Thies Lehmann, *Postdramatic Theatre*, trans. Karen Jürs-Munby (London: Routledge, 2006).
- ⁵² Antonin Artaud, *Collected Works Vol. 4*, trans. Victor Corti (London: Calder and Boyars, 1968), 252-9.
- ⁵³ Ibid., 252.
- ⁵⁴ Ibid., 252.
- ⁵⁵ Brian Singleton, "Plague", in *Le Théâtre et son double* (London: Grant & Cutler Ltd, 1998), 23-31.
- ⁵⁶ Hand Thies Lehmann, *Postdramatic Theatre; Tragedy and Dramatic Theatre*, trans. Erik Butler (London: Routledge, 2016).
- ⁵⁷ Olga Taxidou, "Machines and Models for Modern Tragedy: Brecht/Berlau, *Antigone-Model 1948*", in *Rethinking Tragedy*, ed. Rita Felski (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008), 241-62.
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